

committee chairs.⁷⁴ The new constitution, completed by March 1868, was highly criticized in newspapers but remained in place with revisions through subsequent legislatures. The main tenets of the new constitution affected all levels of state and local government, including provisions for universal manhood suffrage, and, overall, made the state more democratic in voting and office holding. Critics of the new constitution, including the previous ruling elite mostly still disfranchised from their actions during the war, feared that the ability of blacks to vote and hold office would result in the subjugation of the traditional ruling elite to the control of poorer classes of both races.⁷⁵

The new constitution was placed before voters for ratification at the same time that a new election for state and county officials was held in April 1868. The resulting pre-election debates were bitterly fought with both the Union League and the Ku Klux Klan, out of state organizations imported to the state as a result of Reconstruction, bringing their agendas to bear. Whereas the Union League sought methods to ensure that blacks would remain loyal to the Republican Party, the Ku Klux Klan established itself in North Carolina by 1868 as an organization that quickly became a tool for the Democratic Party. Although possibly in place prior to the 1868 election, the Klan's first organized public appearances in North Carolina began during the election when members sought to

prevent blacks from voting or having a role in government.⁷⁶ Despite the Klan's efforts to intimidate black and poor white voters, Republicans carried a majority of counties, the constitution was ratified, and Holden was elected governor.⁷⁷ The new General Assembly, thoroughly dominated by the Republicans, promptly ratified the Fourteenth Amendment and elected two Republicans to the United States Senate.⁷⁸ Congress accepted the newly elected Republican representatives and senators from North Carolina in July 1868, thus

⁷⁶ Prior to the appearance of the Klan in Wilmington, another group, called Regulators, formed in early 1867 to raid and damage farms and homes of African Americans. The white community didn't respond to stop the raids despite outcry from white Republicans and the Freedmen's Bureau. Zuber, *Reconstruction*, 25; Trelease, *White Terror*, 69; Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 284-5; Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 131.

⁷⁷ New Hanover's population was 58% "colored" at election time and 62% of the votes cast in the county were Republican. Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 102.

⁷⁸ New Hanover's representatives in the General Assembly of 1868-69 were Senator Abraham Galloway and Representatives Joseph C. Abbott (resigned, July 16, 1868), Llewellyn G. Estes, George W. Price and George Z. French (replaced Abbott and took seat after special election, November, 16, 1868). George French worked as a supplier for the U.S. Army and arrived with the occupation army equipped with items to sell soldiers. By the end of the war, French was selling items in the retail market and also worked as a commission merchant in naval stores and cotton. French also purchased a plantation near town where he tried to instruct locals on farming methods and developed the area's first fertilizer industry. Also involved in politics, French secured the votes of blacks through persuasive speechmaking. New Hanover's representatives in the Assembly of 1869-70 were Senator Abraham Galloway and Representatives Llewellyn G. Estes, George Z. French, George W. Price, Jr. and John S.W. Eagles, a black man who replaced Estes after his resignation. Cheney, 449-450; Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 152; Cheney 447-448, 558; Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 286; Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 114-118.

⁷⁴ The term, "carpetbagger" was developed by Conservative southerners to define men who relocated to the South from the North after the war. "Scalawags" was the derogatory term developed by Conservatives to refer to native southerners who supported the Republican Party. Charles R. Wilson and William Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 1193.

⁷⁵ Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 394; Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 266-69, 273-78.